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C827: Zither Dissension of the Cranes

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Chapter 827: Zither Dissension of the Cranes

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Upon understanding what had happened, Jiang Qingqin and Ning Hai's eyelids began twitching uncontrollably.

To render twelve cranes unconscious in a demonic tunist examination, you have truly made history today!

After confirming that the cranes had only fainted, Jiang Qingqin heaved a sigh of relief before turning to Zhang Xuan.

"The school zithers are made out of ordinary materials, so they are usually only used in 1-star examinations. Beyond that, examinees are expected to bring their own zithers along with them… I understand your situation. Why don't you use my zither to play here? If six cranes dance to your melody, I will apply for your 6-star demonic tunist emblem personally!"

"Alright!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

Since the other party had volunteered to apply for the 6-star emblem for him, he was spared an additional trip to the Demonic Tunist Aula. Taking the zither from Jiang Qingqin's hands, he gently brushed his fingers past the strings, and a crisp sound reminiscent of top-quality jades clashing with one another sounded.

"A good zither this is!" Zhang Xuan commended.

Just by listening to the sound produced by School Head Jiang's zither, Zhang Xuan could tell that it was innumerable times better than the old zither he had used previously.

Taking a deep breath, Zhang Xuan adjusted his state of mind before beginning to play a light melody.

"A 1-star music score?"

Seeing how that fellow was playing a 1-star music score, both Jiang Qingqin and Ning Hai shook their heads. However, just as they were about to speak, the cranes in the courtyard abruptly flew over.

No more and no less, there were exactly six of them!

"It is actually possible to charm six cranes simultaneously with a 1-star music score?" Jiang Qingqin and Ning Hai nearly fainted from shock upon seeing that sight.

A 1-star music score, as the name suggested, was an elementary demonic tune, and it was limited in its prowess. To make an analogy, it was like a Mortal battle technique—no matter how exquisitely one executed it, there was a cap on the prowess one could exert through it.

Even if they were to play a 1-star music score, it wouldn't be very effective. Yet, the young man before him had actually charmed six cranes into dancing to a 1-star music score…

Was this still the same fellow who knew nothing about six cranes or seven cranes several hours ago?!

To become like this after a night of studying…

Just what kind of monster are you?

It is no wonder you were able to create such a storm in the Master Teacher Academy… your talent is terrifying!

"What if… he uses a 6-star music score?" Vice School Head Ning couldn't help but wonder at the possibility.

Since the young man was capable of bringing out the prowess of a 6-star demonic tunist with a 1-star music score, what would happen if he were to use a 6-star music score?

Would seven cranes soar into the sky instantaneously?

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Would he immediately make the breakthrough to become a 7-star demonic tunist?

With such thoughts in mind, the eyes of the duo immediately lit up.

Thus, at the end of Zhang Xuan's current piece, Jiang Qingqin flicked his wrist and took out a music score.

"Zhang shi, this is a 6-star music score, Tides of the Spring Moon. Give it a try!"

Zhang Xuan took the music score and looked through it.

As expected of a 6-star music score, it was indeed significantly more complex than the one he had played previously. However, the complexity also made it easier for him to draw out the richness of the intent he harnessed within.

If he could only bring out 30% of the intent as a 6-star demonic tunist with the previous tune, he could bring out 100% with the one he was currently looking at, or perhaps, if he were to utilize the music score well, it could even go beyond that!

Triiiing ting tang ting!

After contemplating how he would play the tune, Zhang Xuan laid his hands on the zither once more, and a melody carrying a faint trace of authority within it burst into the surroundings. As if a rising tide, it filled the entire courtyard.

Hearing the zither melody, in a moment of daze, Jiang Qingqin and Ning Hai seemed to see a beautiful full moon rising gradually from the water's surface. Amid the spring night, it brought a dim illumination to the world beneath as the darker side to the world sprung to life.

The spring river coalesced with the calm sea; a brilliant moon rose amid the tides. Shimmering waves charged along with the tides into the horizon, and nary was there a sight devoid of moonlight!

Qiu! Qiu!

The melody grew more and more fleeting, and under the influence of the atmosphere, the cranes soared into the sky.

One crane, two cranes, three cranes…

In the blink of an eye, six cranes were already dancing above Zhang Xuan, seemingly dancing along with the waves, mesmerized by the radiance of the moon.

Hu!

Just as School Head Jiang and Vice School Head Ning were enchanted by the melody as well, the remaining ten cranes by the side called out simultaneously, and one of them soared up to join the dancing six.

But before that crane could even get close, another one leaped up to bite it and dragged it down to the ground.

After which, a second crane spread its wings and prepared to fly up, but before it could lift off the ground, yet another crane rushed forward to stop it.

In the blink of an eye, the remaining ten cranes were tangled in a ferocious fight against one another, unwilling to let each other get ahead of them.

In just a short moment, a rain of feathers had already fallen to the ground, and blood dyed the surroundings red. The cranes, which had lived harmoniously with one another for many years, were currently glaring hostilely at one another as if they were archenemies, dying to tear each other apart with their beaks.

"This…"

Jiang Qingqin's body couldn't help but shudder at that sight, and he uttered hoarsely, "This is the phenomenon which only one who has achieved an astounding grasp of demonic tunes can produce… Zither Dissension of the Cranes?"

The capability of a demonic tunist was determined by the number of cranes they could charm with the melody they played. However, if all of them were enticed into dancing, a situation might occur where they competed with one another for the slot.

The divine crane was an extremely proud beast. If they were to see their companions dancing to a melody, they would be reluctant to make a move themselves, unless… the demonic tunist's level of playing had reached an unbelievable level, inducing an uncontrollable urge within the cranes to dance to the zither melody.

However, there was a limit to the slots. Thus, they could only tussle with one another to fight over it.

Peng! Peng! Peng! Peng!

The ten cranes fought with one another ferociously, determined to become the final one to join the group. After a long and bloodied battle, which resulted in a tragic grave of feathers on the ground, the victorious crane finally flapped its wings and joined the group unsteadily.

But while it had won, it was a miserable victory. Its feathers had nearly all been torn off by its other companions, revealing the crimson flesh and skin beneath.

The dance of a featherless crane—there was not one thing that was divine or graceful about it!

At the end of the music piece, Zhang Xuan finally recovered from the trance he had fallen into in the midst of his playing, and when he saw the bloodied mess from the tragic battle of the ten cranes, he leaped in horror.

What happened while I was playing the zither?

Just as Zhang Xuan was bewildered by the absurd sight before him, he suddenly saw Jiang Qingqin and Ning Hai rushing to him with eyes gleaming in excitement.

"This… Does this mean that I have cleared the 6-star demonic tunist examination?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"If this doesn't constitute a pass, nothing will… Don't worry, I will apply for the 7-star demonic tunist emblem for you right now!" Jiang Qingqin said.

"7-star emblem?" Zhang Xuan was stunned.

"Indeed. Your comprehension of demonic tunes has definitely reached 7-star!" Jiang Qingqin nodded in awe.

To be able to induce the Zither Dissension of the Cranes, his capability was even above that of ordinary 7-star demonic tunists!

Upon hearing that the other party would help him apply for the emblem, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. "Thank you!"

With this, he would have five supporting occupations cleared. As long as he received another 6-star emblem and his cultivation reached the required level, he would be able to attempt the 6-star master teacher examination!

On top of that, with his comprehension of demonic tunes reaching the level of a 7-star demonic tunist, it would be much easier for Zhang Xuan to help Jiang Qingqin achieve a

breakthrough in his level of playing as well.

Activating his Eye of Insight, he began assessing Jiang Qingqin carefully, but a moment later, a peculiar expression surfaced on his face.

"What's wrong? Is it impossible for me to achieve a breakthrough?" Seeing Zhang Xuan's expression, School Head Jiang couldn't help but be worried.

He had thought that it would be easy for the other party to offer him pointers for him to achieve a breakthrough given the level of attainment the other party had achieved, but from the looks of it, he was probably being too optimistic.

But that was no wonder. If it was that easy to make the breakthrough to a 7-star demonic tunist, he wouldn't have been stuck at a bottleneck for an entire five hundred years.

Seeing the disappointed look on School Head Jiang's face, Zhang Xuan hurriedly explained the situation.

"It's not that it's impossible, but…

"… you have already made the breakthrough. Your comprehension of demonic tunes… has already reached the level of 7-star!"

"I have already made the breakthrough?" School Head Jiang was stunned.

Even Vice School Head Ning was dumbstruck after hearing Zhang Xuan's words.

Are you for real?

It was just yesterday that I was still stuck at the Attainment of Six Cranes, and I haven't really done anything since. How and when did I achieve the breakthrough?

"If I'm not mistaken, School Head Jiang must have a transcendent view of worldly affairs. You view all matters with nonchalance, am I right?" Zhang Xuan asked.

Vice School Head Ning nodded in agreement. "School Head Jiang is a very composed person. He is able to retain his calm even in the face of a calamity."

He had always been in awed of his old friend's ability to allow nothing to get to him.

"It is not without reason that demonic tunes have such a prefix. In order to truly understand the essence of the word 'demon', one has to experience the various vicissitudes of life—birth, death, illness, separation, nostalgia, desire, envy… These are the emotions that provoke us to strive for greater heights… Possessing a transcendent view of worldly affairs mean that your mind has stagnated. As such, how can you expect to reach greater heights?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"This…" Jiang Qingqin fell into deep contemplation.

Five hundred years ago, he had undergone a major event which allowed him to view most affairs with nonchalance. He had thought that he had achieved enlightenment, but from the looks of it, that wasn't the case.

"Living in the mortal world, it is only normal for us to be involved in and affected by worldly affairs. To pay no heed to them and even avoid thinking about them… that isn't transcending beyond mortal affairs but escapism! If you have already chosen to escape from everything you faced, how can you possibly pave your way forward to accomplish a breakthrough?" Zhang Xuan questioned.

"You're right…" Jiang Qingqin's face paled in realization.

The other party was right. To pay no heed to worldly affairs was not enlightenment but escapism!

"There are many experts who would immerse themselves within the vicissitudes of life and experience all kinds of emotions so as to find the impetus to achieve a breakthrough. Yet, you chose to do the opposite. You secluded yourself in your residence, choosing to involve yourself in nothing at all… That is the reason you have been stuck at a bottleneck for the past five hundred years!" Zhang Xuan sighed deeply in lamentation.

"Yesterday, by taming your cranes, I managed to evoke your anger, resulting in a ripple in your stagnated state of mind, which became the impetus for you to overcome your bottleneck. In other words… you achieved a breakthrough yesterday!"

It was just yesterday that he didn't understand the true difference between six cranes and seven cranes, thinking that it would do as long as he convinced the seventh crane to join in the dance. Who could have known that an unintentional act on his part would actually allow the other party to achieve a breakthrough…

It was indeed a blessing in disguise!

If he hadn't experienced such a matter personally, it would have been hard for him to believe that there could be such a coincidence in the world.

After hearing the lecture, Jiang Qingqin closed his eyes for a brief moment, and the days he had spent over the past five hundred years flashed through his mind in an instant.

The next moment, he stood up, clasped his fist, and bowed. Determination and gratitude could be seen in his eyes.

"Zhang shi, thank you for your guidance. From today onward, in the path of a demonic tunist, you shall be my teacher!"

"This… How can I?" Not expecting that the esteemed head of the Demonic Tunist School would suddenly acknowledge him as his teacher, Zhang Xuan was astonished for an instant before swiftly waving his hands.

"It is proficiency and not seniority that matters in the path of learning! I might have been studying demonic tunes for a far longer time than you, but my comprehension of it still isn't as deep as yours… Your words today have answered a doubt that I have harbored for more than five hundred years. Until you are willing to acknowledge me, I will not rise from my bow!" Jiang Qingqin said persistently.

"This… Alright then!" Seeing the determination and earnestness in the other party's actions, Zhang Xuan eventually relented.

With his acceptance, the Library of Heaven's Path in his mind jolted lightly, and a golden page materialized.

However, this wasn't the time to be looking at it. Zhang Xuan hurried forward to help School Head Jiang up.

"Teacher, I will chop down the Phoenix Timber Tree now and procure its core for you. As for its trunk, I will craft a suitable zither for you!" School Head Jiang said.

"I'll be troubling you…" Zhang Xuan nodded.

After which, they chatted awhile longer, and Zhang Xuan offered Jiang Qingqin and Ning Hai some pointers regarding demonic tunes which benefitted the duo greatly.

Two hours later, with the Phoenix Timber Core—which Jiang Qingqin had just had a student procure for him—in hand, Zhang Xuan clasped his fist and bade the duo farewell.

However, the moment he stepped out of the Demonic Tunist School, a thought suddenly struck him, and his face warped in shock.

Damn it… I was too concerned with the demonic tunist examination that I forgot about my appointment with her!

Gathering the books, studying, and taking the demonic tunist examination… By the time he was done with all that, it was already daybreak. Yesterday, Luo Ruoxin had told him that she would look for him later in the night, but it was already way beyond the agreed timing.

Thus, Zhang Xuan hurriedly returned to his manor, and Sun Qiang hurried forward to report to him.

"Young Master, Lady Luo came last night to look for you, but after learning that you weren't around, she left…"

"Did she say anything?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Nothing at all…" Sun Qiang shook his head.

"Nothing?" Zhang Xuan scratched his head in bewilderment.

Luo Ruoxin had said that she would look for him last night, but she ended up leaving without saying anything… What was she up to?

"I will head over to her residence to take a look!" Zhang Xuan said.

Returning to the Master Teacher Academy, he found Luo Ruoxin's residence, and after asking around, he learned that the other party wasn't in, so he could only return to his manor helplessly.

Even though he did feel a little stifled within due to missing Luo Ruoxin's appointment, considering that the latter seemed to have some important matter for him, it was likely that she would return another day. Thus, there no need for him to feel so conflicted over this issue.

In any case, his efforts the previous night had brought him the Phoenix Timber Core, so it wasn't really a wasted trip anyway. As soon as he obtained the Grand Intermittence Grass and the other medicinal herbs from the old elders, he would be ready to forge the Grand Intermittence Pill.

Under the nourishment of the Earth Vein Spirit Essence, even though it wasn't sufficiently potent to heal Wei Ruyan's body, it was still able to prevent the state of her physical body from declining any further at the very least. Besides, it would take some more time before the Ten-leafed Flower nurtured her soul to a satisfactory level, so there was no rush at all.

When Zhang Xuan returned to his manor once more, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Now that he finally had some time to himself, he suddenly recalled a fellow who he had been neglecting over the past few days—Byzantium Helios Beast!

It had been around eight days since he had captured that fellow on Leiyuan Peak, but he hadn't had any time to interrogate it properly yet. Since he finally had some time at hand, it would be good to coax some news on the Otherworldly Demons from it.

Considering that we are in the center of the city, in the vicinity of the Master Teacher Academy, I should set up a formation to conceal that fellow's aura. Otherwise, I might be noticed by others when I release the Otherworldly Demon puppets on it!

The manor Zhang Xuan was currently residing in was enormous, so there was more than sufficient space to deal with the Byzantium Helios Beast here. However, considering that they were in the middle of a bustling city instead of some remote mountain, it was still imperative to take some precautions so as to ensure that no one would learn of the Otherworldly Demon puppets.

Not to mention, they were extremely close to the Master Teacher Academy as well. Considering the sharp senses that Saint realm experts possessed, it was best not to take his chances.

He was currently a 4-star formation master, so he was familiar with quite a few grade-4 formations. After some searching about, he finally found a suitable one.

This 'Aura Sealing Formation' should do!

The Aura Sealing Formation served to isolate all auras within a set area from the rest of the world.

As long as a Saint realm expert didn't consciously attempt to peek in the area, it would be hard for them to notice what was within the Aura Sealing Formation.

While it was only a grade-4 pinnacle formation, it was currently the best formation capable of concealing auras that he could come up with.

Even though he had experience setting up grade-6 Hidden Formation in the underground chamber, the formation was incapable of concealing auras or even sound. Given the current circumstances, the Aura Sealing Formation was much more useful.

I should begin!

Taking a swift look at the courtyard, Zhang Xuan swiftly deduced the ideal manner in which he should set up his formation before abruptly throwing several hundred formation flags out at once.

Hu hu hu!

The flags soared through the air and landed in their corresponding locations simultaneously.

Weng! The formation came to life.

Hundred Flags of Void Sealing!

"Alright…"

Seeing that the formation had been set up, Zhang Xuan flicked his wrist and took out the Myriad Anthive Nest, and the next moment, a massive ape saint beast appeared on the ground.

After being trapped for over a week, the Byzantium Helios Beast was finally released from its confines!

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